

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE: CENTURYTEL OF CHESTER, INC.	DOCKET NO. SPU-99-11
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ORDER APPROVING INTRALATA DIALING PARITY PLAN

(Issued April 25, 2000)

On April 22, 1999, CenturyTel of Chester, Inc. (CenturyTel), filed a petition asking the Utilities Board (Board) to suspend the dialing parity requirements of 47 U.S.C. § 251(b)(3), as applied to CenturyTel. Section 251(b)(3) requires, among other things, that each telecommunications carrier provide dialing parity to competing providers of telephone exchange service and telephone toll service. Section 251(f)(2) permits the Board to suspend or modify the application of any requirement of § 251(b) or (c) for rural carriers providing service in Iowa, which are defined as local exchange carriers with fewer than 2 percent of the nation's subscriber lines.

In support of its petition, CenturyTel stated that it is a rural telephone company, as defined, because it serves less than 2 percent of the nation's installed telephone lines, in the aggregate. CenturyTel is a subsidiary of Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. (CTE), which is the parent of various rural carriers throughout the United States. As of March 31, 1999, CTE (through its subsidiaries) served 0.7 percent of the nation's installed subscriber lines, in the aggregate. In Iowa, CenturyTel provides local exchange service to 192 access lines in and around Chester, Iowa, along with 52 lines located in Minnesota.

CenturyTel stated that the switch it used to provide service to its Iowa and Minnesota access lines, a DMS-10 CAMA switch, was incapable of offering dialing parity. A new switch was scheduled for installation by the end of the first quarter of 2000. Until the new switch is installed, it would be technically infeasible for CenturyTel to offer dialing parity. After installation of the new switch, CenturyTel expected to be able to offer dialing parity by the end of the second quarter of 2000.

Finally, CenturyTel stated that suspension of the dialing parity requirements as applied to CenturyTel would serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. CenturyTel stated that accelerated replacement or upgrade of the existing switch would result in a significant adverse impact on its customers because of the increased costs associated with expedited replacement or upgrade. CenturyTel stated it would notify the Board as soon as the switch replacement was completed and submit a plan for implementing dialing parity.

Based upon the information submitted by CenturyTel, the Board granted the requested suspension of the dialing parity requirements of 47 U.S.C. § 251(b)(3).

On March 31, 2000, CenturyTel filed its dialing parity implementation plan. The plan does not explicitly state that the switch replacement has been completed, but, based upon CenturyTel's earlier representations, the Board understands the filing of the plan to signify that dialing parity is now technologically feasible for CenturyTel.

CenturyTel proposes to offer dialing parity for intraLATA and interLATA toll in the Chester exchange beginning on June 30, 2000. As a part of its filing, CenturyTel provided a proposed customer notification form for direct mailing. The proposed

notice will inform customers that they may change their preferred interLATA carrier and their preferred intraLATA carrier two times without incurring PIC charges during a six-month period ending December 31, 2000. If customers do not make a selection during this period, AT&T will be their selected interLATA toll provider and CenturyTel Long Distance will be their intraLATA toll provider.

The Board will approve CenturyTel's plan for implementation of intraLATA dialing parity.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

The IntraLATA Dialing Parity Plan filed by CenturyTel of Chester, Inc., on March 31, 2000, is approved.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ Allan T. Thoms

/s/ Susan J. Frye

ATTEST:

/s/ Raymond K. Vawter, Jr.
Executive Secretary

/s/ Diane Munns

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 25th day of April 2000.